

# The Monthly Musical Record.

JANUARY 1, 1874.

## THE YEAR 1873.

THAT the year just expired has in this country been one of more than usual musical activity can scarcely have escaped the notice of the most casual observer. We are not speaking now merely of the number of concerts given, or the quantity of music actually published, because a large portion of both exerts no real influence at all on the progress of the art; but the spread of really good music during the past twelvemonth has been such as to afford cause for hearty satisfaction, and to fill us with increasing hope for the future. But this very activity to which we are referring considerably increases the difficulty of the task we have set before ourselves in attempting a retrospect of the musical events of the year, and we must ask the indulgence of our readers, should they find our notice incomplete, and even more the pardon of our professional brethren, should any of their numerous and meritorious efforts be inadvertently passed over without mention.

The first point which must arrest attention, in glancing at the past year, is the remarkable progress in public favour in this country made by the music of the modern German school. Not in any one particular quarter, but in all directions, are indications of this progress observable. The concerts of the Wagner Society, the Philharmonic, the Monday Popular Concerts, Mr. Charles Hallé's Recitals, one and all have done something towards the propagation of the "new faith." We have purposely not included the Crystal Palace in our enumeration, because that excellent institution has always been in the van in every good work; we are speaking rather of those of our older institutions whose tendencies have previously been rather retrospective than prospective. The Wagner Society, of course, stands by itself. Only recently founded, with the especial object of popularising the works of Wagner, Liszt, and other modern composers, it has already achieved a success and excited an enthusiasm which has at once delighted the progressive, and astonished, if not dismayed, the conservative school of musicians; and, while it is impossible that Wagner should ever be fairly judged and truly appreciated in this country till one of his great dramas is actually produced here upon the stage, the small excerpts from his works which have been given at these concerts have certainly served to whet the appetite of the musical public, and inspired a general wish to know more of the best-abused composer in Europe. Should the promised performance of *Lohengrin* actually take place in the coming spring, its chances of success will be immensely greater than would have been the case a year ago, owing very largely to the exertions of the Wagner Society, and its energetic chief, Mr. Dannreuther.

Hardly second to Wagner, in his progress towards general recognition here, has been Johannes Brahms—one of the most original and thoughtful of living German musicians. The production of his "Deutsches Requiem" at the Philharmonic concerts, of his "Serenade" at the Crystal Palace, and the frequent selection of his chamber works in the programmes of the Monday Popular Concerts, Mr. Holmes's Musical Evenings, and Mr. Charles Hallé's Recitals, besides the not infrequent introduction of his music at private benefit concerts, have done much towards securing him that recognition to which his great talents

fairly entitle him. Liszt, again, is a composer who has come prominently before the public, mainly through the exertions of his pupil, Mr. Walter Bache; and though the extreme novelty of his forms, and the entire breaking through of all conventional modes of treatment, militate largely against the acceptance or popularity of his works with a mixed public, his music will always be listened to with interest, if not invariably with unalloyed pleasure, by musicians.

The most gratifying feature of the past year in connection with our art, we unhesitatingly pronounce to be the large increase of opportunities afforded to English composers for the production of their works. During no year that we can remember have so many native compositions been produced as during 1873. Here, again, as in most other respects, we find the Crystal Palace concerts in the post of honour. Though himself a German, Mr. Manns (to his honour be it said) has proved himself a better friend to English composers than any other conductor—unless we perhaps except Mr. Barnby at the "Exhibition Concerts," to which we shall refer presently. During the last season of the Saturday Concerts no less than twelve important English works—seven of them for the first time—were produced; and the series of concerts now in progress promises to be equally fruitful in English productions. Next in importance to the Crystal Palace concerts, and hardly second to them in their exertions on behalf of native music, have been the daily concerts at the Albert Hall, in connection with the International Exhibition, to which a brief reference was made in our last Number. At these concerts Mr. Barnby brought forward a very large number of compositions by English musicians, many of which we believe had not been previously heard in public, and the quality of many of the works performed was such as to show that we possess in our midst far more musical talent than most foreigners—or, for the matter of that, most of our fellow-countrymen—would credit us with. Although we cannot boast of an English Mozart or Beethoven, yet while we can produce such musicians as Bennett, Macfarren, Sullivan, Smart, Barnett, Cowen, Stephens, Gadsby, and others whom we might name, we need not shrink from comparison with the larger number of foreign composers of the present day. It is much to be desired that these excellent concerts may be resumed during the present year, and, indeed, become a permanent institution.

But not only at the concerts already referred to have opportunities been given to our countrymen; there has also been an increased tendency on the part of the managers of provincial festivals to commission works from English writers. At each of the four important festivals held during the past year native talent was well represented—at Birmingham by Mr. Sullivan's *Light of the World* (which, we understand, the composer, following the excellent example of Mendelssohn with his *Elijah*, is retouching); at Hereford by Sir F. Ouseley's *Hagar*; at Bristol by Mr. G. A. Macfarren's *St. John the Baptist*; and at Glasgow by Mr. Smart's *Jacob* and Mr. Lambeth's 86th Psalm. Mr. Kuhe also, at his Brighton Festival, produced Miss Gabriel's *Evangeline*, a work expressly composed for the occasion; and Mr. Rea, at his admirable series of concerts at Newcastle, though not bringing forward any absolute novelties, took good care that English art should be fairly represented. In chamber-music, again, frequent opportunities have been afforded to English musicians, especially at the excellent concerts directed by Mr. Henry Holmes and Mr. Ridley Prentice, both of whom deserve honourable mention on this score. On the other hand, it is to be regretted that at a few of our leading

institutions, especially the Philharmonic Society and the Monday Popular Concerts, the old conservative policy has been maintained, so far as our countrymen are concerned. This would be more intelligible and consistent if the selections were entirely confined to the older masters; but when "modern German" composers are allowed to appear in the programmes, we confess ourselves unable to see why "modern English" writers should be so carefully excluded.

We have spoken at such length of these two points—which we think the most important in connection with the musical history of the past year—that it will be impossible for us within reasonable limits to attempt anything like a *résumé* of the concert performances, &c., which have marked its course. For these we must refer our readers to our last volume, and content ourselves with a notice of one or two features of special interest.

Foremost among these has been the first appearance in this country of Dr. Hans von Bülow. Seldom, if ever, has a pianist produced so great an effect on the public; and never, probably, has any one visited us whose performances have given rise to more difference of opinion. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of this subject; but it may be remarked that the marked diversity of the impressions produced on his hearers is readily accounted for by the striking individuality of his playing. Our own opinion has been so frequently expressed in these columns that it is almost superfluous to say that we unhesitatingly call him one of the greatest living pianists; and our opinion will, we believe, be endorsed by the large majority of our readers. It is to be hoped that Dr. Bülow will be sufficiently satisfied with his reception in this country to repeat his visits regularly, and that we may expect his periodical appearance as we do that of Mme. Schumann or Herr Joachim.

The revival, after a lapse of more than a century, of Handel's fine oratorio *Theodora*, and of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*—for both of which we are indebted to the enterprise of Mr. Barnby—should not go without a word of mention.

Opera during the past year has been even more than usually unfruitful in results. The most important promise—that of Wagner's *Lohengrin*—was not fulfilled; nor can we confidently expect an improvement in the future, while the opera continues to be what it is at present, not a place to which audiences go for the sake of good music, but a mere fashionable lounge for listening to popular vocalists. On the other hand, English opera at the Crystal Palace, under Mr. Manns' able direction, has been most successful, and, though from its very conditions marked by some shortcomings, has on the whole been highly creditable to all concerned in it.

The total destruction by fire of the Alexandra Palace, within a month of its opening, was a severe loss to the cause of music in the north of London. Not only was the excellent orchestra assembled under the bâton of Mr. Weist Hill dispersed, but one of the finest organs in the country was destroyed. There is reason, however, to hope that the loss is only a temporary one, as we understand that the palace is to be reopened during the present year, and that the musical arrangements will then be on their former complete scale.

It remains, in conclusion, to name the principal deaths in the musical world during the past year. Two of the most distinguished German musicians, Ferdinand David and Friedrich Wieck, have been called away, while among other more or less renowned Continental artists should be mentioned M. Georges Hainl, the conductor of the Paris Opera; M. Drouet, the flute-player; and Prince Poniatowski, the amateur composer. Of Englishmen we have

to regret the loss of Henry Hugh Pierson, John Lodge Ellerton, and Frank Mori, as well as of others less directly connected with the practice of music, but intimately associated with it in various ways. Such are the veteran Thomas Oliphant, Mr. Augustus Harris, Mr. J. F. Puttick (of the Sacred Harmonic Society), and Mr. Samuel Smith, of Bradford.

The year now commencing gives every promise of being at least as musically eventful as its predecessor. We trust that its promise may not be belied, and that the results of the impulse given to the art in 1873 may be seen by the production of an even larger amount of good music, both English and foreign, than has been witnessed in the year that is past.

## MENETRIERS, TROUBADOURS, AND MASTER-SINGERS.

(Continued from Vol. III., page 141.)

### BLONDEL DE NESLE AND RICHARD CŒUR DE LION.

RICHARD, called Cœur de Lion, the third king of England of the line of the Plantagenets or Anjou, and second son of King Henry II., ascended the throne in the year 1189. Shortly before, the generous Sultan Saladin had been victorious in the battle of Tiberias, and had reconquered Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre. The European Christians felt it to be their duty to avenge this defeat, and deemed it indispensable to declare war again with Saladin. Richard Cœur de Lion, undoubtedly the most valiant and chivalrous prince of the time, was particularly anxious to show his bravery and his sincere devotion to the holy cause. With him this eagerness had almost become a fanatic passion. To be enabled to procure at that time—so noted for its scarcity of money—the necessary means, he not only sold his own jewels and treasures, but even disposed of the domains and jewels of the crown (regalia). "I would even sell London," he said, "could I but find a buyer for it." King Philip Augustus of France joined Richard in this war. If, from his personal character and position, King Philip was fit to represent among the crusaders the part of Agamemnon, King Richard, on the other hand, possessed all the virtues and failings of Achilles. Owing to his intrepidity, which had in it a touch of the romantic, and to his innate desire for adventures, he was called "Cœur de Lion" (Lion-heart), and thus became one of the most famous and admired heroes of that chivalrous time. His very name was dreaded and feared by the Saracens and the Turks, and the might of this name became so powerful that the mothers threatened their crying children with it, in order to intimidate and thus quiet them. Joinville, who relates this in his "Life of St. Louis," mentions also another circumstance, which is still more characteristic of the irresistible influence of this great name. He relates that when the horses of the Arabs shied or became restive, the riders, in giving them the spur, exclaimed: "Dost thou fancy thou canst see King Richard?" It is scarcely possible to give a more decided proof of Richard's influence, and the great power his name exercised upon his enemies. The Romancists of the period found something so admirable in the deeds of the chivalrous king, that they could not help fancying that Richard was in the actual possession of Kalibur or Escalibor, the magic sword of the great warrior King Arthur; although it is related in other books that, according to the wish of Arthur, his shield-bearers threw his famous sword, after his death, into the sea. Notwithstanding the personal bravery of King Richard and some of his allies, all their endeavours to reduce the Saracens to submission proved of no

avail. A fatal jealousy divided the Christian princes, and thus paralysed a power which, if united, would undoubtedly have become dangerous and destructive to the Saracens. Richard himself was too proud, too impulsive, and his passions were too vehement, not sometimes to offend the feelings of his allies; at the same time he was not wise enough to reflect that by affability and amiability, and a certain forbearance, he would attach his allies much more to himself and the holy cause for which they all fought, than by making them feel his superiority. At a time when there was the greatest chance of wresting Jerusalem from the possession of the infidels, the King of France, the Duke of Burgundy, and Leopold, Duke of Austria, separated themselves from Richard. The English king now remained alone, and although he took Ascalon, the only result of his severe and bloody fights consisted in a truce, which stipulated "that the Christians were, for three months, days, and hours, allowed to visit the Holy Sepulchre." During the siege of Ascalon, Richard had offended the Duke Leopold of Austria so greatly that the latter (although not sufficiently brave to demand satisfaction with the sword from such a valorous antagonist as the lion-hearted Richard) went home, his breast filled with the most intense and bitter hate, and determined to wait for a welcome opportunity to take revenge, without placing himself in any immediate personal danger. He had not long to wait. Sooner than he could have expected, Richard's carelessness and imprudence offered him such an opportunity. Richard was obliged to return home, not only owing to political disturbances in England, but also because of the ignominious invasion by King Philip Augustus of France of Richard's hereditary French provinces; the valiant warrior had to leave the Holy Land for England and France. Near Aquileja, the ship which brought Richard to the European shores was wrecked. He was obliged to continue his journey on foot in the disguise of a pilgrim. Anxious to avoid the suspicion of the Governor of Istria, and fearing to pass through France, he selected the road by Vienna as being the safer one. But here, in Vienna, he was looked at with suspicious eyes; his generosity, his noble and chivalrous demeanour, ill-fitted the simple garments of a pious pilgrim. In short, he was recognised, arrested, and thrown into a prison in the royal castle of Dürnstein (between Linz and Vienna) close to the Danube. The prison was certainly not worthy of the noble prisoner; but the poverty of the accommodation just suited the desire of Leopold of Austria, Richard's inveterate and bitterest enemy. Here, at Dürnstein, happened the romantic and decidedly interesting episode which we are going to relate, and which renders the old castle, situated in most picturesque scenery, even at the present moment interesting to every one who passes the Danube from Linz to Vienna.

Richard had passed the greater part of his youth in his French hereditary provinces, and also in the *Provence*, the home of song, the abode of the troubadours. It was here that he learned to admire and to adopt the art of the troubadours, an art to which he became attached, and remained devoted throughout his entire life. Endowed with a heart full of love and romantic feeling, he here became a poet; and when at last he ascended the throne, his court became, like that of Hermann the Landgrave of Thuringia (see Richard Wagner's opera, *Tannhäuser*), the scene of activity for the most renowned troubadours, among whom Fouquet de Marseilles, Anselm Faydil, and Blondel de Nesle were Richard's special favourites. Blondel de Nesle had followed Richard into the Holy Land, and returned to Europe at the same time as his royal master. During the great storm which

caused the ship of the English king to be wrecked near Aquileja, Blondel's vessel was driven into the lagoons of Venice. Blondel, anxious to find again his beloved master, travelled on foot through Germany and the Netherlands, everywhere looking out anxiously and attentively for his lord. At last, not finding any clue to his whereabouts, he returned to England; but here also he was unsuccessful in discovering any trace of the chivalrous king, for the captivity of Richard had remained a secret for more than a year. Blondel the faithful was determined to find out the abode of his royal master, and, had he even to traverse the whole of Europe, to succeed. For a long time all his endeavours to find a clue were of no avail; at last an indefinite rumour reached him—a rumour that his king was imprisoned. Remembering the feelings of hatred of Leopold, Duke of Austria, towards his master, Blondel started at once for the Austrian states, even calculating that it would be near Vienna that the incensed and revengeful duke would hold his bitterest enemy a prisoner. After having made many fruitless attempts to hear anything about the royal prisoner, he followed the course of the Danube upwards from Vienna to Linz. On this road he came to the old castle of Dürnstein, and heard at the same time that an important prisoner was kept there under the strictest surveillance; nobody could inform him as to "who" the prisoner was, or for what reason he was kept so strictly guarded. Good Blondel's heart beat so violently that he felt instinctively it must be here that his beloved master was suffering from the spite and hate of his former ally. All attempts to bribe the gaoler were unsuccessful; moreover, Blondel had to be very cautious not to arouse the suspicion of the warders. At last he hit upon the idea of approaching as closely as practicable the window of the tower, from which he suspected he might be heard by the prisoner. He succeeded in doing so in the stillness of the night. After having preluded on his instrument, he began to sing a *romanza*, composed by Richard himself in Palestine at a time when ardent love for the beautiful Marguerite, Countess of Hennegau, filled his whole heart. Blondel began thus:—

Brennend tobt in mir das Fieber,  
Sengte jedes Lebensband,  
Meiner Augen Licht ward trüber,  
Und herüber  
Aus dem finstern Schattenland  
Streckte schon der Tod nach mir  
die kalte Hand.  
Da kam mein Lieb mit holdem  
Blick  
Und Tod und Fieber wichen zurück.

Fierce in me the fever burning,  
Strength and confidence unmanned,  
Eyes, though dark their sight is  
turning,  
Yet discerning  
Through the gloom Death's pallid  
hand  
Grimly stretched across from out  
the spectral land;  
Then came my Love so bright and  
true,  
And Death and fever quickly with-  
drew.

Here the minstrel stopped; as each verse of the song had a refrain, he was sure that if the captive was really Richard, he would now betray himself in singing the refrain.

Blondel's supposition proved quite right. A voice, hollow, yet well practised in the art of singing, answered from the prison:—

Ich sag' es ohn' Erröthen  
Das süsse, werthe Weib  
Es hilft in allen Nöthen  
Und tröstet Seel' und Leib.

I know with full assurance  
That Woman's gentle care  
Brings comfort, hope, endurance,  
In time of deep despair.

Blondel continued:—

Ringsum mit Gefahr umfungen,  
Focht' ich in der wilden Schlacht;  
Dicht, wie Gottes Hagel, drangen  
Spies' und Stangen  
Auf mich ein mit aller Macht;  
Schon ersank mein Arm und um  
mich her ward's Nacht:  
Da rief ich meine Dame an,  
Und Sieger blieb ich auf dem Plan.

When to arms the trumpet sounded,  
Swift I rushed amid the fray,  
Where the heaviest blows abounded,  
Till surrounded  
By the foe, I stood at bay;  
Powerless sank my arm, black night  
obscured my day:  
On Love I called, nor called in vain,  
And victor rested on the plain.



The same voice replied :—

Ich sag' es ohn' Erröthen  
Das süsse, werthe Weib;  
Es hilft in allen Nöthen  
Und tröstet Seel' und Leib.

I know with full assurance  
That Woman's gentle care  
Brings comfort, hope, endurance,  
In time of deep despair.

Blondel finished with the last verse of the song :—

Lasst das Feldgeschrei erschallen,  
Wie im ungestümen Meer  
Winde brausen, Donner knallen,  
Alles fallen,  
Alles spalten um mich her  
Hohes Muthes wird mein Herz doch  
nimmer leer;  
Kein Schicksal mich zu Boden fällt,  
So lang die Lieb' empör mich hält.

When the air is rent asunder  
By the furious battle-cry,  
When the lightning and the thunder  
Raise our wonder  
And alarm, resigned am I;  
Never from my heart shall trust and  
courage fly;  
Though danger still my steps pursue,  
Love always bears me safely through.

The voice again answered :—

Ich sag' es ohn' Erröthen,  
Das süsse, werthe Weib  
Es hilft in allen Nöthen  
Und tröstet Seel' und Leib.

I know with full assurance  
That Woman's gentle care  
Brings comfort, hope, endurance,  
In time of deep despair.

Great was Blondel's joy, as now there was no longer the least doubt that it was his beloved royal master who had answered him; but to make quite sure, he improvised a fourth verse to the same melody :—

Neid und feige Rachgier lauern  
Nachts im Wald dem Löwen auf,  
Zwingen ihn in finstern Mauern  
Auszuauern;  
Treue leitet Blondel's Lauf:  
Marre, Löwenherz! bald springt  
Dein kerker auf!

Foul revenge and envy waken  
'Gainst the Lion coward spite;  
Trapped, he is to prison taken,  
All forsaken;  
Faith guides Blondel's search aright;  
Lionheart! soon shines before thee  
Freedom's light!

And at once the voice of the unseen captive replied likewise in improvisation :—

O wäre Margot nur bei mir,  
Der Himmel, sprich ich, wäre hier!  
Denn—soll ich dess' Erröthen?  
Das süsse, werthe Weib  
Es hilft in allen Nöthen  
Und tröstet Seel' und Leib.

Were lovely Margot now with me,  
This dungeon would a heaven be!  
For—I know with full assurance  
That Woman's gentle care  
Brings comfort, hope, endurance,  
In time of deep despair.

Now the good and faithful Blondel was quite certain of having found his king. To offer him at once material aid, or to effect his immediate release, was out of the question; but it was already a consolation for him to think that his master knew that he had been found, and that the poor prisoner had heard the voice of his favourite and devoted minstrel and friend. Blondel lost no time in returning to England; there he at once acquainted the barons of the realm with Richard's captivity, and thus succeeded in restoring the chivalrous king to his country, although this took a long time; several months passed before the English nobles could persuade the Emperor, Henry VI., and the Duke Leopold of Austria to restore King Richard to liberty.  
E. PAUER.

[The material for this slight sketch has been taken from Fauchet's work, "Recueil de l'Origine de la Langue et Poésie Française," page 93, and from an essay of Wieland, written 1777.]

(To be continued.)

#### MENDELSSOHN IN PARIS.

(TRANSLATED FROM FERDINAND HILLER'S NEW BOOK, "LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS OF MENDELSSOHN.")

We can see from his letters in how many ways Mendelssohn felt himself stimulated in the French capital, at that time (1831-32) the capital of Europe also. He, like so many other persons, shared there in performances and associations, in which he took part, not without a certain prejudice, which he would perhaps rather have kept at a distance, but into which he, notwithstanding, after some scruples, allowed himself to be drawn.

The first years after the Revolution of July are certainly

among the best in the recent history of France. People were still under the fresh influence of the "three days." All had received a new impulse, and in literature, and in the arts especially, there prevailed an extraordinarily active rich life. As regards our beloved music, things could hardly be wished to be better. The so-called "Concerts de Conservatoire," under Habeneck, were still in all their vigour; and Beethoven's symphonies were performed with a perfection and received with an enthusiasm such as I have only exceptionally seen since. For the Royal chapel in the Tuileries Cherubini wrote his masses; at the Grand Opera Meyerbeer began the series of his triumphs with *Robert le Diable*; Rossini wrote *Guillaume Tell*; Scribe and Auber were at the height of their activity; at the Italian Opera the first singers were united. Excellent, nay eminent, performers resided in Paris, or came there to gather Parisian laurels. Baillot, at an advanced age, still played with all the energy and poetry of youth; Paganini had given twelve successive concerts in the Grand Opera; Kalkbrenner, as a tasteful technical player, represented the school of Clementi; while Chopin, a few months before Mendelssohn's arrival, had settled in Paris; and Liszt, after the mighty excitement he had received from Paganini, seldom appeared indeed in public, but played most extraordinarily. German chamber-music was not so well known as it subsequently became—still, Baillot's quartett had fanatical adherents, and in many German and French houses the most serious music was lovingly cultivated, and talented artistes found there the heartiest reception. With what warm joy Mendelssohn, under such circumstances, was received by the best portion of the musical world may be imagined.

The first thing that I remember at the moment of his arrival is the *Walpurgisnacht*. I still see before my eyes the little closely and neatly written score which he had brought with him from Italy. So strongly had this music impressed me, that it was still all familiar to me when I heard it for the first time sixteen or seventeen years later under my own direction. I must mention here, too, the first of the "Lieder ohne Worte" (in E major). He had composed it in Switzerland, and was evidently somewhat impatient to introduce it to his friends; for in the very first days of his stay he played it to Dr. Franck and myself, and called it by its newly-invented—since so much misused—name. It is with pieces of music with which we have become acquainted soon after their appearance, and which subsequently attain to great popularity, as with men whom we have known as boys, and who have become famous—we retain through life a kind of if not fatherly, at least "godfatherly" feeling for them.

I first heard Felix play his best on the piano one evening in Leo Valentin's house, the piece being Beethoven's D major trio. For it was a peculiarity of Mendelssohn's to play his own new compositions, if he let them be heard in private, with a certain reserve, which was evidently the result of the intention not to seduce by his performance, and to allow the work to produce its effect simply by its contents. But if he played compositions of our great masters, he was always as it were in fire and flames. Oftenest and best I heard him during this winter in Baillot's circle in Baillot's house, and in that of an old venerable lady, Mme. Kiéné, whose deceased daughter, Mme. Bigot, had given Felix, as a little boy, some lessons on the piano. He played Bach's and Beethoven's sonatas with Baillot, Mozart's concertos (with quartett accompaniment), in which he always improvised splendid cadenzas; as well as his own quartett in B minor, and other things. It was a small but musically very cultivated circle which assembled there and listened to what was offered with kind of devout piety.

Mendelssohn had also brought with him to Paris the provisional score of the *Hebrides* overture.\* He told me how not only the form and colour of the piece rose before him at the sight of Fingal's Cave, but how even the first bars, containing the principal subject, occurred to him there. In the evening he paid a visit with his friend Klingemann to a Scotch family. In the drawing-room stood a piano; it was on a Sunday—no possibility of any music. He exerted all his diplomatic skill, till he succeeded in opening the instrument for just one minute, which he employed in playing for himself and friend that theme from which afterwards the original masterpiece grew. But not till some years after was it completed at Düsseldorf. Habeneck, too, took a warm interest in the genial young man; and a great number of the excellent artists forming his orchestra showed him respect and attachment. Among these there were especially some quiet young musicians, who were also friends of mine, whom he loved to see often, and who attached themselves to him with that affectionate warmth which is often peculiar to the French. I name before all the excellent violoncellist, Franchomme; the talented violinists (pupils of Baillot), De Cuvillon and Sauzey, the latter of whom afterwards became the son-in-law of his master. "Ce bon Mendelssohn!" they often said later of him; "quel talent, quelle tête, quelle organisation!" Cuvillon opened to him his whole heart, and, not without emotion, Felix told me one evening of his confessions; how he had come to Paris full of enthusiasm for Baillot, to take lessons from him, and had thought that such a man must surely have a princely existence; how he had imagined his whole mode of life and the appointments of his house, and now had found this king of violinists on a third floor, in almost straitened circumstances, giving lessons the whole day, serving as accompanist for young girls, and playing in the orchestra. That had made him so sad; and he could not even yet understand how it was possible.

[Our readers may be interested to know that the whole of Dr. Hiller's book, from which the above extract is taken, is about to appear in English. It will be first given in monthly portions in *Macmillan's Magazine* (the first part of which appears in the present Number), and afterwards republished in one volume.]

## Foreign Correspondence.

### MUSIC IN NORTH GERMANY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LEIPZIG, Dec., 1873.

DURING the mourning of the country for His Majesty the late King Johann all public musical performances were stopped. However, on the 8th of November a series of concerts began, the principal object of which was a musical commemoration of the late much-beloved prince. In the afternoon of the above-named day the following choruses were performed at the Conservatorium: "Ecce quomodo moritur justus," by Gallus; offertoire, "Pie Jesu," from the *Requiem* by Cherubini; the motett by Mendelssohn, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" and the chorus from *St. Paul*, "Happy and blest are they." Three movements from "The Seven Last Words" (for string instruments) were inserted between these choruses. All these works were performed in good style by the students of the establishment. On the evening of the 8th of November the *Musiker Verein*, in conjunction with the *Riedelsche Verein*, conducted by

Professor Riedel, performed Liszt's *Heilige Elisabeth*. It is impossible for us at present to express our views in regard to this work. In a few words this cannot be done. It would be an injustice to a musical production of such great importance, which—however widely the impressions it has made may differ—was apparently written from pure love and devotion.

We promise our readers to return to Liszt's oratorio in our letters next summer, and to discuss this subject thoroughly in a special article. The following short intimation must suffice—that, with regard to Liszt's *Heilige Elisabeth*, we are far from coinciding with the decidedly enthusiastic tone of the so-called new German music Party, and still less with the haughty depreciation and contemptuous ignoring evinced by others.

The work and its performance affected us in the most varied manner. Whilst the orchestra had been taught with difficulty its by no means severe task, the choir had been trained in the most careful and genial manner by Professor Riedel, and sang in perfect time, with vigour, expression, and sonorous voices. The great chorus, "The Crusaders," came out with particularly good effect. We have seldom heard such a numerous chorus of men with such fine voices. The oratorio itself had to be considerably shortened for performance in Leipzig, and many of the fine parts were wanting—as, for instance, the close of the work, the sixth part (Burial of Elizabeth).

The Gewandhaus re-opened its hall on the 13th of November, and gave on that evening the fifth concert this season; as a matter of course, in commemoration of King Johann. The first part of the concert began with Mendelssohn's motett (for eight voices), "In the midst of life we are in death." This chorus *à capella* was excellently sung, especially the two last verses. It was followed by the cantata, "Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde," by Bach, sung in fine style by Mme. von Lawrowska. The Dead March from *Saul*, by Handel, which followed, made a peculiarly earnest and grand impression. Mme. von Lawrowska showed again her charming style of singing in the air, "Oh, rest in the Lord!" from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. The first part ended with the "Funeral Music" and "Consolation in tears" from Spohr's symphony "The Power of Sound."

But we now come to the principal event of the present musical season, the *Deutsches Requiem*, by Brahms, which occupied the second part of the concert. We do not hesitate to designate this work as the most important composition of the highly-gifted author, and shall next summer devote to it a large space. Then we shall be in a position to lay before our readers the motives for the admiration which we feel for this work. The limits allotted to us only permit us to state that we consider the *Requiem* by Brahms a glorious creation. The depth of feeling and the devotion which pervade the whole work, the peculiar earnestness of the ideas, as well as the whole construction of the seven different movements, will make a lasting impression on every hearer. We do not at all assert too much, when we say that Brahms's *Requiem* is the most important work of the principal Schumann "Epigone," and we advise all artists and lovers of art to make themselves acquainted with this most interesting score. This performance of the *Requiem* is already the second one in the Gewandhaus. The choruses, solos, and orchestra were all worthy of the highest praise.

A few days afterwards Riedel's society gave it in the Thomas-Kirche, where it had the advantage of the organ and a larger chorus than that in the Gewandhaus; but sometimes they did not work together with sufficient precision. This is by no means intended as a reproach to the talented conductor of the society, Professor Riedel.

\* Probably the early version of this work recently produced at the Crystal Palace.—TRANSLATOR.

The fault lies more in the fact that the organ-loft of the Thomas-Kirche is not suitable for the position of a large choir and orchestra. Uncertainty as to the time is inevitable, if part of the performers can see the conductor but indistinctly or not at all.

The sixth concert at the Gewandhaus began with Mendelssohn's "Reformation Symphony." This work was not published during the composer's lifetime, and neither Rietz nor Hauptmann would allow it to appear amongst his posthumous works. It is only a few years ago that this early work of Mendelssohn was printed. Now one must not suppose that the symphony in question is a weak composition. It is distinctly proved how severely Mendelssohn scrutinised his own works, and with what severity his most sincere friends and enthusiastic admirers criticised them, when they prevented the publication of the "Reformation Symphony." What appears to us most worthy of admiration is the artistical self-knowledge of the gifted composer, who lays aside a work which, though it is clever, does not equal his other compositions, aware that it is in his power to write something better and nearer perfection.

Rheinberger's prelude to the opera, *The Seven Ravens*, was given as a novelty on the same evening. The instrumentation is very effective, but the piece offers neither ideas nor form any striking parts. A violoncello concerto, composed by the renowned violoncellist, Cossmann, also produced for the first time, was played in the most accomplished manner by the composer himself, but as a composition it has no intrinsic value. Mme. von Lawrowska's performance at this concert consisted in the Furies' scene from Gluck's *Orpheus*, and songs by Reinecke and Schubert, of which "Ungeduld," by Schubert, was the most successful.

The seventh subscription concert at the Gewandhaus was distinguished by the appearance of Mme. Clara Schumann. We think it quite unnecessary to say anything about the playing of this the most excellent of lady pianists. The enthusiasm produced by her playing was general, and we ourselves belong to the most ardent admirers of this great artist. As something new, Mme. Schumann played the piano concerto, Op. 15, by Brahms. The work ranks high in conception of thought; especially the two last movements are excellent. The first movement appeared to us to be less elaborated, yet it offers a number of clever and original traits. In the concerto, the solo instrument has the difficult task of contending with the orchestra, and it frequently fails to make head against its powerful opponent. Mme. Schumann played her husband's beautiful A flat canon, from the "Studies for Pedal-piano," as well as his D minor romance (Op. 32), and, earning enthusiastic applause, added her own transcription of the scherzo in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Herr Schott, of the Royal Opera, Berlin, was the singer of the evening; however, in the air from *Il Seraglio* ("Constanze"), he hardly succeeded in justifying the great reputation which preceded him. He was more successful in songs by Schubert and Schumann. It is possible that, in the first song, the singer laboured under a difficulty, through momentary indisposition. His voice is a lyric tenor. The orchestra works played at the concert were Schumann's overture to *Genoveva*, and the B flat symphony of Beethoven. Both pieces were executed to perfection.

Mme. Schumann charmed us also at the third evening concert of chamber-music at the Gewandhaus. She played her husband's quartett (Op. 47); his F sharp major romance (Op. 28); the barcarolle by Chopin; and, in reply to the urgent demand of the public, the first Novelette by Schumann; all these compositions were

reproduced in the most perfect manner. A short but very pleasing string quartett, by Haydn, in D major, was the opening piece of the evening. We have never before heard this quartett, but were delighted with it. Beethoven's string trio (C minor, Op. 9), was heard to advantage. This work, out of Beethoven's first period, is most remarkable for its Titanic effects, produced by but scanty means—viz., violin, tenor, and violoncello.

In the third concert of the Euterpe, Raff's "Wald-Symphonie" was but indifferently performed.

We have nothing to announce of our Opera. For a considerable time its repertoire has moved within but narrow limits, and it offers no matter to enlarge upon.

## MUSIC IN VIENNA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

VIENNA, Dec. 12th, 1873.

WEEK by week the number of concerts increases. The remembrance of a work or its performance scarcely outlasts a season, and we must take more notice, therefore, of the accidental exceptions. To begin with the second Philharmonic concert, we heard Beethoven's overture, Op. 124; the charming piano-concerto in E minor, by Chopin; "Wallensteins Lager" (part of a symphony), by Rheinberger; and the Scotch symphony, by Mendelssohn. The piano-concerto was played by Frau Annette Essipoff, a former pupil of the Conservatoire in Petersburg. She unites the best qualities of a first-rate pianist—Chopin, particularly, is her forte. She was much applauded, and recalled to the platform. The third Philharmonic concert opened with Spohr's *Faust* overture, now seldom heard. The serenade, No. 2, in A major, by Brahms, is somewhat too fine for a great hall; it satisfies all the demands of a veritable serenade, and was heard with much interest. The gigantic symphony, No. 5, by Beethoven, closed the concert, which included also the Polypheme aria, sung by a pupil of Rokitsansky—Herr Joseph Staudigl—whom I mentioned already last year. The audience was charmed to see the gifts of the never-forgotten father revive in the son. It is true the execution was not that of the father, who gave us the giant, mastering the rocks; it was a shy and almost sentimental lover; but one thing was certain—the beauty of the voice, as well as its flexibility and purity in intonation. Therefore, Polypheme, mild as he was, found a hearty welcome. May he prosper! The second Gesellschaft concert showed again the careful hand of its conductor. After the overture to *Fierrabras*, by Schubert, Herr Walter sang a MS. aria by the same favourite composer. The aria was composed as an additional number in Herold's opera, *Das Zauberflöckchen*. It is a valuable specimen of Schubert's talent, and can be recommended to every good tenor. The Concertstück, for piano and orchestra, by Volkmann, was exquisitely performed by Herr Smietansky, a young pianist, whose name, I think, will soon become familiar to the concert-goers. Two choruses *d capella*, by Joh. Rud. Ahle, and Seb. Bach, were the more interesting as the beginning and end of the words in both were the same: "es ist genug." Then came (performed for the first time) the cantata, "Nun ist das Heil," No. 50 of the new Bach edition, for double chorus, orchestra, and organ. The impression of that short but gigantic work was quite overpowering. Bach in his whole glory stood like a hero in the middle of the great hall. The execution of the complicated composition is very difficult, and was a task worthy of a choral society like our Singverein. The audience was electrified, and it was one of those moments which will not be forgotten. The conductor, Brahms, can boast again, that he knows how



to make familiar to the public our greatest masters. A chorus by Gallus ("Ecce, quomodo") led to Beethoven's fantasia, for piano, chorus, and orchestra, in which again Smetansky took the part of piano. Frau Essipoff gave also two private concerts; one with orchestra to perform the concerto in D minor, by Rubinstein, and another new one, by J. Zellner. Rubinstein's composition, though it requires the hand of a man, was capitally performed. The concerto by Zellner is a proof of the progress of that talented composer; its form being compact, the themes and treatment interesting, and the whole of a happy freshness. The reception was very encouraging. The Conservatoire arranged a theatrical performance to celebrate on its part also the imperial jubilee-day. A stage was erected in the great hall, and scenes from operas were performed in costume. The singers and the orchestra (likewise students) did honour to their masters; the whole being conducted by its director, Hellmesberger. Some of the performers, as Fr. Louise Proch (daughter of the well-known Kapellmeister), and again the young Staudigl, promised hereafter to become acquisitions for the opera. Also the Cäcilien-Verein celebrated the day of the Emperor by an evening concert in St. Michael's Church. The programme, of sacred music only, ran through three centuries, from Palestrina, Josquin de Prés, Leisring, Perti, to Bach and Handel (of the younger composers—Bortniansky, the so-called Russian Palestrina, Rosetti, and Töpfer—the latter was not well chosen). The small, but well-trained choir was led by its director, Jos. Böhm. Of the concert of the Singacademie, I mention only one number—"Wartburg-Lieder," by Liszt, as an intimation of its production. The clever abbé must excuse me when I say, his composition was one of the poorest I ever heard. To judge as to the occasion which caused the composition (the nuptials of the Duke Carl August of Sachsen), the composer seems not at all inspired by that patriotic festival. The two first quartett-soirées of Hellmesberger had their never-failing habitués. We had, among other things, two piano-quartetts, by Brahms and Schumann, performed by Professor Schenner and Frau Essipoff, and a quartett in G minor, by Volkmann, who is now in Vienna on a visit. Volkmann is always welcome; also his quartett—a concise composition—had a warm reception.

Lastly, as to the opera, is to be mentioned the appearance of a much-deserving fioritura singer. Fr. Emilie Tagliana is in possession of a somewhat thin but sympathetic voice, in the upper notes not free from some sharpness. Scales, roulades, trills, are good, but not yet finished. The execution is natural; and the fair singer, though a beginner, seems to be at home on the stage. On the whole the result was very favourable, and is the more to be appreciated, as it was not a small task to perform Dinorah shortly after the great Patti. Oscar, in Verdi's *Maskenball*, produced a similar result, and now we shall hear the young singer as Zerline in *Fra Diavolo*. The *Hugenotten* had a singular interest from the performance of Frau Wilt as the Princess Margarethe. With that experiment the problem was solved whether Frau Wilt really is fit for such a rôle. She sang like a born fioritura-singer; meanwhile the rôle of Valentine, in which she always excelled, was likewise performed in a surprisingly good manner by Frau Materna. It was altogether an auspicious evening, Herr Rokitsansky (Marcell), Adams (Raoul), and Frau Koch (Urban), were all satisfactory. As to the performance of *Oberon*, I am sorry to say that the lovers of Weber were much disappointed. The direction, anxious lest the insipid book and its dialogues should not be suited to the new great house, thought it best to shorten the dialogue and to give the work a new charm by splendid decorations. We have now another

doubtful spectacle, which would be good enough for the suburb, if the music were not too excellent for such a murderous experiment. I cannot understand why the direction make no use of the excellent arrangement by Sir Julius Benedict, which gives the opera a very favourable rounding-off. Moreover, no one singer was in the right place excepting Frau Wilt, who had the only applause with the Ocean aria. It is true the decorations are beautiful, particularly the moving scene, but is the opera the place for such things? The poor mermaid's song was tortured by repeating it a hundred times, as long as the passage of the moving decoration lasted. But what is more to be regretted, the taste of the public is offended by such violence. They come, nevertheless, and call the painters on to the stage—but who thinks of the music?

Fortunately I have already exceeded the space reserved me in your columns or I would become bitter. The following operas have been performed since the 12th of November:—*Dom Sebastian* (twice), *Fliegende Holländer* (twice), *Hugenotten*, *Tell* (twice), *Romeo und Julia*, *Waffenschmied*, *Dinorah* (twice), *Mignon*, *Don Juan*, *Judin*, *Fidelio*, *Maskenball* (twice), *Favoritin*, *Oberon* (four times), *Lustigen Weiber von Windsor*.

#### THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND MUSIC.

The following letter has been forwarded to us for insertion:—

Education Department,

Whitehall, London, S.W.

1st September, 1873.

SIR,—In connection with the approaching visit of Mr. Hullah to the training schools under inspection, I am directed to forward for your information the annexed copy of the reply made to a memorial addressed to the Department by the Council of the Tonic Sol-Fa College, which has lately appeared in some of the public journals.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant.

F. R. SANDFORD.

Education Department,

Whitehall, London, S.W.

28th August, 1873.

REV. SIR,—The memorial which you recently forwarded to this Department has been carefully considered.

Their lordships would have been glad if this memorial had been signed by the various members of the Council of your College. They would have been better able to estimate the importance of the statements it contains if they had known by what professors of music, and other recognised authorities in the musical world, the memorial was addressed to them.

I am to point out, in reference to the preamble, that in forty-two training colleges visited by Mr. Hullah last year the Tonic Sol-Fa notation was in exclusive use in only four—Darlington, Hamersmith, Liverpool, and Swansea; while both notations were used in four others—Bangor, Glasgow (Free Church), Homerton, and Edinburgh (Episcopal)—including the two colleges not mentioned in the Parliamentary Return to which you refer.

My lords do not consider that the adoption by a college of the "tonic principle," or, more properly, the use in solfège of "the movable do," which has long been in use, either implies approval of the "Tonic Sol-Fa notation" or requires a college to be classed with the institutions for whose students special provision has to be made, in respect to that notation, at the Christmas examinations.

I am to reply as follows to the various paragraphs of the memorial:—

1. The tests in "copying music by ear" were given up in consequence of all but universal objection made to them by the authorities of the training schools. Mr. Hullah thinks, however, that in connection with the practical examinations as now conducted by the same Inspector of Music throughout all the colleges, these tests may be applied with advantage. He did so apply them occasionally in the *viva voce* examinations last year, and proposes to do so again.

2. The re-introduction of harmony into the Syllabus for 1873, which was issued in the month of December last, has been received with general approbation. The questions in harmony will be put in Tonic Sol-Fa as well as in the established notation.

3. Mr. Hullah reports that to some extent this recommendation

was acted on in last year's examination. For this year he has already provided the same music in both notations. My lords see no reason for the separate publication of the marks for reading, voice, ear, and style. Every student had last year the "freest option" as to which notation he took. This year the same freedom may be used; but in future every student must take the notation used in his college, or, where both are used, that selected by the authorities of such college.

4. The single question in last year's paper involving acquaintance with the two notations was designedly and properly introduced, because both notations are used in some colleges, and are familiar to many acting teachers who attend the Christmas examination; while the established notation is to some extent studied even in those colleges where the Tonic Sol-Fa notation is paramount. My lords understand that this question was in many instances answered correctly, and very generally attempted, by Tonic Sol-Fa students. They are surprised at the objection to this question, seeing that in a paper issued from the Glasgow Free Church Training College both notations are spoken of as part of the second year's musical course. You will bear in mind that, as the examination papers have to be framed to suit the various courses of study which have been followed in all the colleges under inspection, it is only fair to those students (and teachers) who have mastered both notations that they should have an opportunity of showing that they have done so.

5. The Report to which you refer was sent early in the year, and before it could be presented to Parliament, to the authorities of the training colleges, as directly interested in knowing its contents. It was sent in strict confidence, and my lords would regret, but do not expect, to find that they are unable to place such reports unreservedly in the hands of the committees of these institutions.

Your remarks on the sight-test entirely misrepresent Mr. Hullah's meaning, as will be at once seen on reference to his Report. The words "unsatisfactory" and "confusion" which you bring into juxtaposition, and apply to the Tonic Sol-Fa candidates, occur, the one in page 363, and the other in page 369 of the Report of the Department for 1872-3, and are there used, the former *mainly* and the latter *exclusively*, in reference to the students using the established notation.

Mr. Hullah states—"The errors of the press referred to in this paragraph were discovered the first time an attempt to use the copy containing them was made, and, with the kind help of a Tonic Sol-Fa instructor, corrected. Finding, however, that the 'better method' I had used in it, and the inaccurate spacing justly complained of, created difficulty, I withdrew it as a general test, using occasionally only two or three phrases in it for individual examination. To these no objection was made in any instance. I attach, however, very little importance to any sight-singing that is not individual. Two or three fair readers with strong voices will generally prevent others, reading the same part with them, from making serious errors in music of moderate difficulty. I introduced this collective exercise more with a view of giving the students confidence for their individual examination, than with any distinct practical view. No student's number of marks was (nor could it be) affected by his concern in it, and this year the test was confined to individual students. The passages, for the execution of which marks were assigned, were drawn, in the case of Tonic Sol-Fa students, from authorised Tonic Sol-Fa publications (see note, page 368 of my Report). So far as I can call to mind, this test was only applied collectively in the training schools at Swansea (which attained the highest number of marks for reading of any training school in the country), Bangor, Liverpool, and Edinburgh (Episcopal Church), all of which have excellent places in the list. It was not applied collectively at Glasgow (Free Church), Darlington, or Homerton, nor in any way at Hammersmith. At Edinburgh (Episcopal Church) it was fairly and, of course, voluntarily sung from both notations."

Their lordships wish me to state, in conclusion, that every effort will continue to be made by themselves and their officers to secure that the students in training, on whatever system they are prepared for examination, should be judged by a perfectly fair and equal test. The results published in Mr. Hullah's Report for last year do not appear to afford any ground for believing that the new arrangements for the examination in music were not carried out with that strict impartiality which it is their lordships' duty and desire to observe.

I have the honour to be, Rev. Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,  
(Signed) F. R. SANDFORD.

[We have much pleasure in publishing this explanation, but must say that it hardly appears to touch the point at issue between the Sol-faists and Mr. Hullah. Mr. Curwen's complaint appears to be, not that Sol-Fa pupils lost marks at their examinations, but that the examiner in his Report went out of his way to attack their

system, and to represent it as having failed. For his full reply to Sir F. Sandford's letter, which throws much light on the points in dispute, we must refer our readers to pages 61 to 63 of the pamphlet noticed in our last issue.—ED. M. M. R.]

## Correspondence.

### H. H. PIERSON'S MUSIC TO THE SECOND PART OF GOETHE'S "FAUST," AT LEIPZIG.

To the Editor of the MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD.

DEAR SIR,—Having some months since called the attention of your readers to our lamented composer Pierson, it may now be interesting to give a few particulars of the appearance of the above work at Leipzig. The first performance took place on November 25th, when the theatre was crowded in every part; indeed, so intense was the interest excited, that not a seat was vacant. There seems to have been but one opinion amongst those who were present, viz., "that the music was the work of a great and admirable genius!" The *Leipzig Nachrichten* says, in reference to the work:—"Pierson, a genius of quite a peculiar and original stamp, was wonderfully in advance of his age; his music shows a striking affinity to that of Schumann, Wagner, and Liszt. . . . What we particularly admire is Pierson's interesting and striking individuality, and the nobility and fervour with which he has fulfilled his task." The critic then proceeds to describe the different numbers of the work in detail, and mentions, as being particularly admirable, Scene 1, Ariel and chorus of Fairies; chorus, "Praise the Olympians;" march and chorus; introductions to the 3rd and 5th Acts; chorus of Angels; chorus, "Sound, immortal Harp!" (described as "the most spirited piece in the work"); and the final chorus, "Passed is life's troubled sea"—"a noble crown to the whole."

I have great pleasure in recording the above facts, because it cannot but be gratifying to all true artists to find our composer placed by the Germans on a level with those composers who are now thought most of by that musical people—an honour which has certainly never before been accorded to an English composer! It should be remembered that these eulogies are being passed on the very small portion of Pierson's work to which the public has at present access; what will be said when his MS. opera, *Contarini*, the ten or twelve magnificent MS. overtures, the oratorios *Jerusalem* and *Hezekiah* (besides numerous other works of great magnitude and value), are brought to frequent hearing? It will be a halcyon time for British art, and those who have firmly, and against every conceivable form of opposition, upheld it and its chief representative!

In conclusion, I may ask what steps (if any) are being taken in our musical metropolis to bring Pierson's works to hearing?

I am, yours very truly,

Dec. 9th, 1873.

THEODORE S. HILL.

P.S.—Professor Kietz, the eminent sculptor of Dresden, has just completed an excellent bust of Pierson, in marble. I understand that the work will be shown in the Exhibition at South Kensington next year.—T.S.H.

To the Editor of the MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD.

SIR,—In your review of a posthumous work of Schubert in the last number of the *Monthly Musical Record*, you assign the composition, on internal evidence, to about the year 1820. In the Catalogue appended to August Reissmann's "Life of Schubert" (Berlin, 1873) I find an *Adagio and Rondeau Concertante*, in F major, for pianoforte, violin, viola, and violoncello, the composition of which is referred to October, 1816. You do not mention the key in your review, but I can find no other composition in the Catalogue corresponding to the work in question.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

C. B. H.

[We are much obliged by our correspondent's letter. The composition of which he speaks is no doubt the same reviewed in our columns.—ED. M. M. R.]

## Reviews.

*The Music of the Future.* A Letter to M. Frédéric Villot. By RICHARD WAGNER. Translated from the original German by EDWARD DANNREUTHER. London: Schott & Co.

Of all Wagner's numerous writings in explanation of his art-



theories, the "Brief an einem französischen Freund," of which the present pamphlet is a translation, is probably that in which his views are the most concisely and clearly set forth; and the thanks of the musical world are due both to the translator and to the publishers for affording English readers an opportunity of becoming acquainted with these views in the words of the master himself, instead of, as hitherto, only at second hand; for, however able and interesting such expositions are as those by Mr. Dannreuther, which have appeared in our columns, or those of Dr. Hüffer in the *Fortnightly Review*, one naturally desires, as it were, to talk with Wagner himself, and to come into immediate contact with him.

The difficulty to which Mr. Dannreuther alluded in his pamphlet, when speaking of Wagner's writings—that "they want elucidation, illustration, and translation into a more popular phraseology, rather than further compression"—meets us in its full force in attempting to give our readers an epitome of this letter. There is such intimate connection and logical coherence between the different parts, that at each fresh reading the work of condensation seems to become harder. As the whole letter is only about fifty pages in length, and is published at an exceedingly moderate price, we recommend all the readers of this paper to procure it for themselves, and shall confine ourselves here to a very brief summary of its leading points.

Wagner tells us in commencing that it is designed "to furnish a clear exposition of the ideas on art which I published in Germany some years ago, the nature of which is such as to have created both sensation and vexation enough to prepare for me in France a reception full of expectant curiosity." The reception alluded to, it should be said, refers to the production of *Tannhäuser* at the Grand Opera in Paris, shortly before which event the present letter was published. He then proceeds to point out how he found his dramatic tendencies at utter variance with "the most contestable, the most equivocal public art-institution of the day—the opera."

He next considers the important difference between the position of operatic composers and librettists, as regards the opera in France and Italy, and the position which they occupy towards it in Germany; and he shows how "the opera reached Germany as a finished foreign production, essentially alien to the character of the nation." The true field for the German musician was that of instrumental and choral music, and in the opera he found nothing to serve him as a model.

Wagner then points out "the singular contradiction which in our time a German musician experiences, who, with his heart filled with the spirit of Beethoven's symphony, has to turn to the composition of a modern opera." His remarks on this subject (pp. 15–17) are highly interesting, but too long to quote. His researches ultimately led him to the conclusion that each art, having arrived at its utmost limits, imperatively demands to join itself to a sister-art; and, as he saw no prospect of realising this ideal work of art, "in which all separate branches now unite, each in its highest state of perfection," in his own time, he called it "Kunstwerk der Zukunft"—"art-work of the future"—whence, by the way, came the name of "Music of the Future," as applied to the modern school of German music.

He next considers the suitable subject-matter for this ideal drama, the method of treatment, both vocal and instrumental, and the technical laws according to which this intimate amalgamation of music with poetry was to be effected. Very interesting is the account he gives of the gradual change in his method of procedure through his various works, from *Rienzi*, written on the model of the "Grand Opera" of Spontini and Meyerbeer, to *Der fliegende Holländer*, then to *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, till at last his views on dramatic art find their full expression in *Tristan*.

The concluding portion of the letter is devoted to a discussion of the question whether by Wagner's method the musical form of the melody is not prejudiced by being deprived of its freedom in movement as well as development. Wagner maintains, and gives reasons for his assertion, that "by this proceeding the melody and its form acquire an inexhaustible wealth, of which, without it, no one could form any conception."

Such is a very brief and imperfect outline of the contents of this most interesting letter. One word, in conclusion, must be said on Wagner's style. It is often in the highest degree terse and epigrammatic, full of illustration and felicitous expressions; but, as any one who has tried to render any of his works into English will be well aware, by no means easy to translate. We have compared several passages chosen at random with the German, and can credit Mr. Dannreuther with having produced not only a thoroughly readable, but a remarkably close and faithful version of the original.

ROBERT SCHUMANN'S *Piano Works*. Edited by E. PAUER. Vol. III. Augener & Co.

THE earlier of Schumann's pianoforte works are those which are the most generally known; consequently the present volume, and

still more the fourth (which we understand will complete the edition), will be of even more interest to pianists than those previously issued, because they will probably make the acquaintance of much interesting music which is new to them.

The first piece in the present volume is the sonata in G minor, Op. 22, the finest and most equally sustained of all his solo sonatas. The four "Nachtstücke," Op. 23, rank among the better known of Schumann's works, the fourth being one of the most popular of all his pieces. The great "Faschingschwank aus Wien," Op. 26, is one of the author's most characteristic and finest works. Those musicians who do not know it will, we are sure, be delighted to make its acquaintance. Next follow the "Three Romances," Op. 28, somewhat unequal in merit, of which the second, in F sharp, is a perfect gem. Of the four pieces, "Scherzo, Gigue, Romanza, and Fugetta," Op. 32, the romanza in D minor is the best known; but all are interesting. We then find the concerto in A minor, about which we need say nothing, and then the various pieces ("Studies in Canon-form," Op. 35; "Sketches," Op. 38; "Six Fugues on the Name of Bach," Op. 60) written for the pedal-piano. These can be played on an ordinary instrument, a second player taking the pedal part. We should recommend in this case that the latter part be played in octaves. The well-known and charming "Album for Young People" concludes the present volume.

*Dans les Bois* (Troisième Série). Six Morceaux pour Piano. Par STEPHEN HELLER. Op. 136. Ashdown & Parry.

WE hardly know any piano music at once more grateful to the player and more attractive to the listener than that of Stephen Heller when he is, to use a sporting phrase, "in his best form." Many of his smaller pieces, such as some of the "Nuits Blanches," "Promenades d'un Solitaire," and first series of "Dans les Bois," are in their way perfect models of grace and beauty; and that his hand has not forgotten its cunning is evident from the six little pieces before us. Though some, as might be expected, are superior to others, they rank as a whole among their author's best and most characteristic works. Four of the six pieces have titles suggested by the *Freischütz*, and seem intended, if one may use such a simile, as a translation into "Hellerese" of the spirit of the principal personages of that well-known opera. A word or two on each of the numbers may probably interest our readers. The first piece, entitled "Dans les Bois," in D major and minor, is the very quintessence of Heller's peculiar style. No one acquainted with his other works could, we think, have a moment's doubt as to the authorship. Melody, rhythm, and harmony alike reveal the composer. No. 2, in E flat, is called "Max," and is evidently intended to portray the character of that hero. Without venturing an opinion as to how far this effort is successful, we can unreservedly praise this little piece on abstractly musical grounds. It is bright and melodious in character, and hardly less Hellerish than the first number. No. 3 bears the inscription "Agathe—Max et Agathe." The pensive and dreamy character of the maiden is admirably depicted in the opening slow movement in G minor, which is followed by an allegro in G major, intended, we suppose, to paint the meeting of the lovers. Though very good, this number is hardly one of the best of the set. The following piece, entitled "Couplets de Caspar," is one of the finest of the six. It is in the same key (B minor) as Caspar's celebrated drinking song, the spirit of which is admirably caught without the slightest trace of plagiarism. No. 5, "Annette et Agathe," bringing out the contrast between the melancholy Agatha and her vivacious friend and companion, is another most graceful little piece; and the last number, inscribed "Fleurs Sauvages," though interesting—Heller, indeed, is seldom if ever dry—is not equal to some of its predecessors. On the whole, we can most warmly recommend the series to the attention of pianists.

*Transcriptionen aus Klassischen Instrumentalwerken, für Violin und Pianoforte, bearbeitet.* Von E. W. RITTER. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel.

THESE six transcriptions are one and all most excellently done. While not by any means too difficult to be within the reach of fairly good amateurs, they are not, like many "easy" arrangements, mere caricatures of the originals, but are, on the contrary, remarkable for their fidelity to the original scores. The six numbers before us include Haydn's variations on the "Austrian Hymn," the adagio from Beethoven's septet, a quaint and pretty "Rigodon," from Rameau's opera of *Dardanus*, the larghetto of Mozart's clarinet quintet, the so-called "Clock" movement from Haydn's symphony in D, and the finale from the same composer's symphony in G, known as the "Letter V" symphony. The selection, as will be seen from the above enumeration, is no less excellent than the arrangement.

**Four Characteristic Pieces for the Piano.** By E. H. THORNE.  
Novello, Ewen & Co.

THESE four pieces show that Mr. Thorne has not only ideas of his own, but knows how to use them. The workmanship in all cases shows an amount of skill, and freedom in handling technical material, which place this music above the average of piano-writing of the present day. Mendelssohn and Schumann would seem to be the composers whom Mr. Thorne has taken for his models, the influence of the former being especially apparent in "Regrets," the first piece of the series. For this reason we consider this number the least successful of the four. No. 2, "Prayer," which is short and simple, we like better; but our favourite is the "Eastern Tale," No. 3, which is a thoroughly charming composition. In No. 4 ("Spring Song") we find some trace of Schumann in the harmonies, though not here, as in the first piece, to such an extent as to detract from the merit of the work. On the whole, we can honestly recommend the series to the notice of our readers.

**Anthems for Church and Home.** Edited by CHARLES DARTON.  
Second Edition. London: Warren, Hall, & Co.

THIS little book, which has now reached a second edition, was, if we mistake not, originally published some few years since, and has, we believe, already been introduced into several congregations. It contains a number of short and easy pieces, suitable (as the title implies) either for divine service or domestic use, some being extracts and arrangements from more or less standard works, and others being expressly composed for this book—among the latter being included some pleasing and melodious little pieces from the pen of the editor. The collection will be found useful in places where it is desired to introduce anthems but where the musical capacities of the congregation are of a somewhat limited description. There is hardly a piece in the volume which any one having the least pretension to musical ability ought not to be able to sing with ease.

**Eighteen Nocturnes for the Piano.** By F. CHOPIN. Edited by E. PAUER. Second Edition. Augener & Co.

THE first edition of these Nocturnes having been duly noticed in our columns at the time of its appearance, it is only necessary to say here that the present edition differs from the preceding one merely in its having undergone a careful revision of the text, several errors which had previously escaped notice having been corrected.

**Cramer's Dance Album for 1874.** Cramer & Co.

A COLLECTION of dance-music from its very nature requires no detailed notice in our columns; but as, at this time of the year, some of our readers may wish to know where to get some really good pieces of this class, we recommend the present volume to their notice. It contains a set of quadrilles, a waltz, a set of "Lancers," a galop, and a polka, all of their kind excellent, and admirably adapted to their purpose. We should add that the "get-up" of the volume is very tasteful and elegant.

**SHEET MUSIC.**

**INSTRUMENTAL.**

**Six New Pieces** by MAURICE LEE (Augener & Co.) can all be recommended to teachers in search of novelties in the "drawing-room" style. These are, first, an excellent étude, entitled "L'Electricité," the passages of which are both elegant and improving as practice; a galop, "Le Courier;" and a valse, "Graziella"—these three pieces being founded on original themes. The other numbers are transcriptions, including a showy and not too difficult fantasia on *Guillaume Tell*, a piece founded on two of Schubert's songs, the "Praise of Tears" and the "Serenade" (which, however, hardly fit into one piece so well as we could wish, the effect of the whole being somewhat "patchy"), and lastly a "Gavotte de Louis XV.," very pretty, but much like the "Gavotte de Louis XIII.," which, we presume, will cause the unearthing of a number of similar pieces.

**Obéron, Fantasia, Roses Mousseuses, Polka-mazurka, and Le Long du Rousseau, Idylle,** par E. W. RITTER (Augener & Co.), are three drawing-room pieces by an author whom we do not remember to have met previously, but who writes well enough, in the style which he has chosen, to make us glad to become acquainted with him. As teaching-music these pieces are all above the average.

**I Pifferari, for the Piano,** by WALTER SPINNEY (London: Bertini, Seymour, & Co.), is a very pleasing little piece, with ideas

of its own. The composer apparently also possesses ideas of his own as to the meaning of musical signs, as on the first page we find a passage expressly indicated "staccato," while a *legato* slur is placed over the notes referred to. We should think this an oversight did not the same thing recur further on in the piece.

Herr WOLLENHAUPT's name is so well known to pianists that it will be sufficient to mention the reprint of two more of his excellent pieces, *Mazepa*, Galop de Concert, and *Les Clochettes*, Etude de Concert (Augener & Co.), merely adding that they require a tolerably advanced player to do them justice.

**Fugue, in E,** for two performers on the Piano, by ARTHUR HERBERT JACKSON (Lamborn Cock), are, as appears from the title, the work of a student at the Royal Academy of Music. One can hardly expect much indication of genius in a fugue, unless in exceptional cases; but we may say that Mr. Jackson's studies appear to have produced fruit creditable alike to his instructors and himself.

**Rans des Vaches, by ROSSINI,** arranged for the Piano by E. PAUER (Augener & Co.), is simply the well-known movement from the overture to *Guillaume Tell*, published separately from the rest of the piece. The combination of the solo for the corno inglese with the florid passages for the flute is admirably preserved in this transcription.

**Tarantelle, for Small Hands,** by SCOTSON CLARK (Augener & Co.), is a pretty little piece for young players.

**Wonderland, Quadrille,** by ARTHUR CLEVELAND (Lamborn Cock), is a pretty dancing set, likely to be very popular with children, for whom, from the title, it appears to be intended.

**VOCAL.**

**Morning and Evening Service, in E flat,** by J. L. HATTON (Augener & Co.), are written with the skill of which the composer's name is a sufficient guarantee. An *obbligato* part for the organ adds materially in many places to the interest of the composition.

**Three Songs** ("The Poet's Song," "More fond than Cushat Dove," "Music"), by C. HUBERT H. PARRY (Lamborn Cock), are three of the most charming little songs we have seen for some time. They show real musical taste and feeling, and we can most cordially recommend them. There is, however, a mistake of some importance on the second page of the third song, to which we would call Mr. Parry's attention. The first bar of the second line is not in 6-4 time, as he has marked it, but in 3-2. The difference is important, as he is doubtless aware, and the error should be corrected in a subsequent edition.

**Why I love thee, ash the Roses, Song,** by AUGUSTUS L. TAMPLIN (Cramer & Co.), is a curious mixture. A symphony, containing some progressions more novel than agreeable, introduces a decidedly pretty melody, on the whole well harmonised, and yet in one place (page 3, first line) containing some "consecutive octaves" between the voice part and accompaniment which are simply horrifying. The words, too, require some elucidation. What on earth is the meaning of

"Be content with thine *creation*"?

We can only suppose that no other rhyme to "*creation*" occurred at the moment to the writer.

**While everything reposes, Serenade,** by A. E. M. GRÉTRY (Augener & Co.), is a quaint and graceful specimen of the now nearly forgotten composer of *Richard Cœur de Lion*. The task of adapting the English text (in this case by no means an easy one) has been excellently performed by Mr. Henry Stevens.

**Concerts, &c.**

**CRYSTAL PALACE.**

EXCEPT on the grounds that (to quote a remark of an eminent writer on music) it is imperatively necessary that everything that Beethoven wrote should be performed, it would be difficult to account for the revival (at the ninth concert) of so disappointing a work as Beethoven's cantata entitled *The Praise of Music*. One naturally feels but small interest in a musical work presented with a different text to that to which it was originally composed. Under the title of *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, this cantata was written in honour of and for performance before the allied sovereigns who met at the Congress of Vienna in 1814, its subject being the homage paid by Vienna to her illustrious guests. Though well received at the time, it was not till 1836 that the work was published by Haslinger, and

then with a double text; the original by Weissenbach, and a second, entitled *Preis der Tonkunst*, by Rochlitz, a translation of which, by the late Mr. Oliphant, was made use of on the present occasion. Schindler relates that Beethoven spoke of his having set Weissenbach's wretched verse to music as an "heroic" act; it was, in short, a *pièce d'occasion* in which he could have felt but small interest. The work consists of solos, concerted pieces for the leading parts, and several choruses, in the presentation of which the artists engaged—Mme. Alvsleben, Miss Emily Spiller, Mr. Vernon Rigby, and Mr. George Fox—did their best to fulfil an ungrateful task. Sir W. Sterndale Bennett's sonata, "The Maid of Orleans," which may now be said to have become popular, was heard here for the first time. Though neatly played by Mr. Franklin Taylor, its effect, as might have been anticipated, was far less telling than that which it has made on several occasions in a less telling arena. Herr Straus was greatly applauded for his rendering of the recitative, adagio, and allegro from Spohr's violin concerto, No. 6; but both he and Mr. Taylor suffered from the deadening effect of the chorus in the background. As we have before had occasion to remark, instrumental solos, if only for the sake of the executants, should be avoided on those days when a chorus is employed. The vocal solos included the arias, "Zeffiretti Lusinghieri," from Mozart's *Idomeneo* (Mme. Alvsleben); "It is enough," from Mendelssohn's *Elia* (Mr. George Fox); and "Be thou faithful," from *St. Paul* (Mr. Vernon Rigby), with violoncello obbligato by Mr. R. Reed. The overture was that to Weber's *Der Freischütz*.

The ninth concert falling upon December 6th, the anniversary of Mozart's death, as announced by advertisement, but more correctly speaking that of his burial, seeing that he died during the night between the 4th and 5th December, 1791, and was buried at night-fall on the 6th, the programme was principally devoted to works by this master. The instrumental works by Mozart brought forward included the spirited overture to *La Villanella Rapita*, an opera composed by him in 1779 to words by Bianchi; the pianoforte concerto in E flat, composed in 1785, and played (for the first time at these concerts) by Miss Agnes Zimmermann; and the well-known but ever-welcome symphony in G minor, composed in 1788. The vocal music by Mozart was restricted to a couple of arias—viz., "Quando miro" (composed in 1781), admirably sung by Miss Sterling, and (for the first time) "In accenti di lamenti," from *Zaida* (the eleventh of Mozart's operas, composed in 1779), sung by Mlle. St. Alba. A more interesting Mozartian selection might certainly have been easily devised. Songs by Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn were contributed by Miss Sterling, an American lady, who possesses a remarkably fine contralto voice, and was deservedly greatly applauded. The entertainment wound up with Meyerbeer's aria, "Roberto, oh! tu che adoro," from *Roberto*, sung by Mlle. St. Alba, and Mr. Sullivan's "Overture di Ballo," which, from the incongruity of its position, had very much the same effect as a wake after a funeral.

The eleventh concert commenced with Auber's spirited "Exhibition Overture" in E major—the only one of the four works composed at the instigation of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the opening of the International Exhibition of 1862 which can be said to have survived the occasion. On account of its bright and tuneful character it will probably endure as long as any of this composer's similar works. The appearance of Dr. von Bülow, combined with the fact that Beethoven's "Choral Symphony" was included in the programme, tended to attract an unusually numerous audience. The work made choice of by Dr. von Bülow was Liszt's concerto in E flat, which had previously been heard but twice in England—first when it was played by Mr. Walter Bache at his annual concert of 1871, and subsequently by Mr. E. Dannreuther at the Crystal Palace. On both these occasions it made its mark, and no less so on the present, when the applause it evoked, whether this be due to the work itself or to Dr. von Bülow's masterly rendering of it, was perfectly overwhelming. One would have thought that an overture, a concerto, and a symphony—and that the "Choral"—would have been enough for one concert; but, no! a solo was insisted upon from (or by?) each of the principal vocalists engaged in the "Choral Symphony." Mme. Otto Alvsleben, ably seconded by Mr. T. Watson in the obligato violin accompaniment, was heard to advantage in the aria "L'amor, saro costante," from Mozart's opera *Il Re Pastore*, composed in 1775. Miss Marion Severn made choice of Signor Randegger's popular if not vulgar aria, "Ben è ridicolo;" Mr. George Fox was heard in "Ah, now I feel the burden!" an English version of the romance from Meyerbeer's *Diwan*; and Herr Wertheim in the cavatina "Un jour plus pur," from Gounod's *Nonne Sanglante*—the original form of the "Meditation" for violin and orchestra introduced at one of these concerts in October last. Considering the amount of work (including a long rehearsal on the same morning) that the band had gone through, the performance of Beethoven's "Choral Symphony," though perhaps

not the finest that we can call to mind, was a very creditable one. Some have spoken of, and still look upon, a perfectly satisfactory performance of this remarkable work as an impossibility. We are not among those; but we do think that, to attain this, some modification in certain passages of Beethoven's instrumentation is absolutely necessary. No one who has read the score of this symphony can have failed to remark that there are certain passages in it, well known to musicians, which were evidently intended to "come out" in performance, but do not. To speak slightly of the results of Beethoven's instrumentation may appear irreverent and presumptuous to many; it must, however, be borne in mind that when he wrote down this particular work he was unhappily stone-deaf, and, horrible thought! though present at a performance of it, was unable to hear a single note. Those who, like the present writer, had the good luck to be present at the performance of this stupendous work given under Wagner's direction at Bayreuth, in 1872, look back upon it as the most perfectly satisfactory performance on record. Wagner has since expounded his views as to the alterations necessary to be made in the original orchestration for such an attainment, in the ninth volume of his "Collected Writings." His suggestions are expressed with such reverence for Beethoven, and the necessity of their adoption in order to realise Beethoven's manifest intentions is so self-evident to those versed in the art of modern instrumentation, that we cannot imagine a conductor of the present day attempting a performance of the "Choral Symphony" without taking advantage of them. To Mr. Manns and other conductors contemplating a performance of this master-work, for the present we can only say, *Tolle, lege*—see what Wagner has written on the subject, and profit thereby.

#### MR. WALTER BACHE'S CONCERT.

MR. BACHE'S tenth concert, which, as an annual recurrence, was not due till the present year, was given at St. James's Hall on the evening of November 27th (too late in the month for notice in our last issue), with the view to securing the services of Dr. von Bülow as conductor. Ever since Mr. Bache returned, nine years ago, from his tutelage under Liszt, it has been his principal aim to advance his master's claims, as well as those of one or two other composers, who, till the institution of the Wagner Society, seemed in danger of being altogether overlooked by other concert-givers. By degrees, musicians have come to regard Mr. Bache's annual concert as one of the most important of the season, and certainly unique in its character. Apart from the additional interest derived from the presence of Dr. von Bülow in the double capacity of conductor and accompanist, this concert of Mr. Bache's was, to say the least, as interesting as any that he has given. To the selection brought forward no exception could be taken, except on the ground of its superabundant richness. Though by no means an over-long one, each piece brought forward exacted the closest attention. Some, perhaps, may have felt fatigued, as well as mystified, with the novel character of much that they were called upon to hear, but it may safely be advanced that for habitual concert-goers, and those who listen as a matter of duty, having previously, as far as possible, made themselves acquainted with the new works to be performed, such an entertainment, by reason of its exciting character, is not nearly so fatiguing as one made up of more trivial and more familiar works. By installing Dr. von Bülow as conductor, Mr. Bache, who on previous occasions has given ample proof of his own remarkable skill in this capacity, made it plain that he was influenced by no motives of self-glorification, but simply with the desire to present the works selected in the most perfect manner possible. Of Dr. von Bülow's powers as a conductor, as well as those he possesses as an executant, it would be impossible to speak in too exaggerated terms. When we recall the fact that he conducted the first performances of Wagner's *Tristan*, *Die Meistersinger*, &c., without a score before him, it will be no surprise to those of our readers who were not present at Mr. Bache's concert to learn that he conducted throughout, and even accompanied the songs, from memory. The effect, both as regarded sonority, delicacy, and precision, which he elicited from the excellent orchestra of seventy performers, led by Mr. Deichmann, was truly astonishing. One could not fail to remark this at once in the opening work, Weber's glorious overture to *Euryanthe*, a finer and more striking performance of which we cannot call to mind. The remaining works for the orchestra alone comprised Liszt's "Poèmes Symphoniques," "Tasso," and "Orpheus"—a discussion of which, and of Liszt's musical procedure, would involve a reproduction of an article which appeared in these columns on the occasion of the first-named work being "attempted" in June last, for the first time in this country, by the Philharmonic Society—as well as his spirited march, "Vom Fels zum Meer," composed in honour of the now Emperor of Germany. The enthusiasm evoked by "Tasso" was extreme; no less graceful was the manner in which it was acknow-



ledged by Dr. von Bülow, who, after prolonged cheering, came forward, bowed, and pointed with one hand to the concert-giver, and with the other to the orchestra, as much as to say that to Mr. Bache and the members of the band thanks were due, rather than to the conductor. "Orpheus," though less exciting in character than "Tasso," is certainly none the less beautiful; but being less clearly defined as to its poetical intent, and therefore less easy of comprehension, produced less sensation upon the audience. Mr. Bache, of whose powers as a pianist we have frequently spoken in terms of the highest commendation, contributed his full share to the evening's entertainment by playing, in a masterly manner, Liszt's clever and effective arrangements, for pianoforte and orchestra, of Schubert's fantasia in C major, Op. 15, and Weber's Polonaise brillante, Op. 72, as well as solos by Chopin, Raff, and Schumann.

Mme. Otto-Alvsleben, a host in herself, was the only vocalist. She made choice of four songs of unusual interest and beauty—viz., "Muss es eine Trennung geben?" and "O liebliche Wangen!" by J. Brahms; "Swift roll at my feet," by A. Rubinstein (encored); and "Er ist gekommen," by R. Franz, who, as a song-writer, may fairly be ranked by the side of Schubert and Schumann, but has not yet met with a proper acknowledgment in our concert-rooms. It was interesting to note that Dr. von Bülow had committed even these songs to memory; though the music was handed to him by Mme. Alvsleben, he disdained to make use of it. What a contrast to some of our professed accompanists, who, during the progress of a concert, may sometimes be heard rehearsing their part in the adjoining room! Mme. Alvsleben's greatest essay was, however, in the final scene (Isolde's death) from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, which, finely accompanied by the orchestra, she declaimed in her grandest manner. Here again the audience was roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and demanded a repetition, notwithstanding the fact that it is in *Tristan* that Wagner has reached the limits of his system, having taken, as he has himself averred in his pamphlet entitled "Zukunftsmusik"—an admirable translation of which, by Mr. E. Dannreuther, has lately been published by Messrs. Schott and Co.—a wider step from *Tannhäuser* to *Tristan* than he had done from his first standpoint—that of the modern opera—to *Tannhäuser*.

#### WAGNER SOCIETY.

WITH the exception of Liszt's symphonic poem "Tasso," and Von Bülow's "Marche des Impériaux," from his music to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the programme of the second concert was restricted to works by Wagner. It was probably the warm reception accorded to Liszt's "Tasso" at Mr. Walter Bache's concert that determined its repetition here. Again it was splendidly played under the direction of Dr. von Bülow, who took the earlier portion of it a shade slower than on the former occasion—a procedure by which it seemed to gain in clearness of effect. "Tasso" is certainly a work which grows in favour the more familiar it becomes. We have good reason for thinking that there are many who, at first unable to tolerate a departure from the accepted traditional symphonic form, now admit its interesting qualities as a composition, and that there are as many more who, on a further hearing, have expressed their willingness to waive the restrictions of traditional forms, and have come greatly to admire it. It was again received with marked favour by the audience. "Tasso," as well as the "Marche des Impériaux"—an early work (Op. 10) of its composer, first heard in 1866, and more remarkable for its masterly instrumentation than for its originality of matter—was conducted by Dr. von Bülow, who was loudly recalled after the performance of his own composition. The remainder of the programme, allotted to Wagner, was ably conducted by Mr. E. Dannreuther. The orchestral selection included the overture to *Rienzi* (for the first time at these concerts), that to *Tannhäuser*, together with the introduction to the second act, and the "Kaisermarsch." The vocal music, which was entrusted to Mlle. Nita Gaetano and Herr Werrenrath—neither of whom proved adequate to the task, either by their natural endowments or acquirements by study—included "Elizabeth's Greeting" (*Tannhäuser*), for Mlle. Gaetano; the "Prayer" from *Rienzi*, for Herr Werrenrath; and, for the two together, the duet between Elsa and Lohengrin, from the third act of *Lohengrin*, which, indifferently sung in Italian, was nevertheless loudly re-demanded.

#### MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

THE audiences attracted by Dr. von Bülow, both on Mondays and Saturdays, have been unusually numerous for this season of the year. Thanks also to him, several new and rarely heard works have been brought forward. Among the most important, and both heard here for the first time, may be mentioned Rubinstein's sonata in D major, for pianoforte and violoncello, Op. 18; and Schumann's

trio in F major, for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello, Op. 80. Rubinstein's sonata, in which Dr. von Bülow was worthily associated with Signor Piatti, pleased so much that it was repeated at a subsequent concert. Perhaps even more acceptable was Schumann's trio, which was finely rendered by MM. von Bülow, Sainanton, and Piatti. That this fine work—which certainly appeals more readily to a mixed audience than its companion work in D minor, Op. 63, which has been heard here more than one occasion—should so long have been overlooked, seems, to say the least, surprising. One can only account for this on the supposition that its introduction, like that in time past of other works by Schumann and other composers of the modern German school, was due to the suggestion of individual executants rather than to that of those on whom devolves the general responsibility of drawing up the programmes. Among the most important of Dr. von Bülow's solos may be named Sir W. Sterndale Bennett's sonata, "The Maid of Orleans," which he gave with even more stirring effect than when he introduced it at one of his recitals; and Bach's "Chromatic Fantasia," for which, on being recalled, he substituted Gluck's "Gavotte du Ballet, from *Don Juan*, transcribed by his pupil, Herr H. John. A hearing of Dr. von Bülow (with M. Sainanton) in Beethoven's sonata in G, Op. 96, and in the same master's trio in D major, Op. 70 (with Mme. Norman-Néruda and Sig. Piatti), was no less an unusual treat.

#### DR. VON BÜLOW'S RECITALS.

THE interest of these remarkable entertainments—which, perhaps, may fairly be said to have culminated in the doctor's wondrous performance (at his third recital) of Beethoven's tremendous sonata in B flat, Op. 106—has been maintained to the last. Never has there been an artist before us with so varied and extended a repertoire at his command. We know no other so well versed in every school of music, from the earliest days of pianoforte playing to the present. Some have given the preference to his playing of Chopin as divine; others have spoken of his playing of Liszt as unapproachable; but whether his treatment of Bach, or the light he has shed upon Beethoven's later sonatas, be called in question, it seems no exaggeration to speak of him as appearing thoroughly and equally at home with all that he has attempted, and of his playing generally, that it far transcends that of any other pianist that could be named. Among the most noteworthy of the works brought forward by him at his third and fourth recitals may be enumerated, besides the great sonata by Beethoven, in B flat, Op. 106, already alluded to, the same composer's thirty-two variations in C minor, Schubert's sonata (posthumous) in A major, Sir W. Sterndale Bennett's "Rondo Piacente," Op. 25, and "Three Sketches," Op. 10, Mendelssohn's capriccio in F sharp minor, Op. 3, Liszt's "Trilogie Suisse," and "Polonaise Héroïque," in E, and other works of lesser import. At a supplementary fifth recital, at which songs by Meyerbeer and Rubinstein were contributed by Mlle. Nita Gaetano, he was heard with MM. Sainanton and Lasserre, in Mozart's trio in E major, and Beethoven's trio in B flat, Op. 97, and alone in Bach's prelude and fugue in A minor, for organ, transcribed for pianoforte by Liszt, in Beethoven's adagio in F, con variazioni, Op. 34, as well as in a variety of pieces by Mendelssohn, Rubinstein, Chopin, and Liszt, of which the sprightly "Ronde des Lutins" by the last-named composer was, as on former occasions, again loudly re-demanded.

On the evening of the same day he left London to spend Christmas with the Duke and Duchess of Meiningen, but to return at an early date, his appearance at the Monday Popular Concerts on their resumption on the 12th inst. having already been announced.

#### ROYAL ALBERT HALL CHORAL SOCIETY.

THE production of an English version, by the Rev. G. Troutbeck, of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, under the direction of Mr. Barnby, interesting as it must have been to many, can at best be regarded but in the light of an experiment, the true results of which time alone can show. It was a mistake, which looked very much like an unjustifiable piece of advertising, to announce it as "for the first time of performance in England," seeing that the work, with fewer excisions than were resorted to at the Albert Hall, had already been twice performed at Christ Church, Oxford, on the 2nd and 4th December, and that the performances of an important portion of it given by the now defunct Bach Society, under the direction of Sir Sterndale Bennett, in June, 1861; again, when a futile attempt was made to resuscitate the "Ancient" concerts, under Herr Schachner, in 1868, as well as by the students of the Royal Academy of Music, under Mr. Hullah, in 1870, must be within the recollection of many. Except with the view to gaining notoriety for it, it seemed a mistake to bring forward in the concert-room a work so manifestly intended for use in church alone. Though designated by Bach, as

appears from his original manuscript, *Oratorium tempore natiuitatis Christi*, it may more properly be regarded as a series of cantatas or anthems, each of which is designed for use in church on a particular festival—viz., as Bach expressed it, the first, second, and third days of the festival of Christmas, New Year's Day (the festival of the Circumcision), the Sunday after New Year's Day, and the festival of the Epiphany. But, though each of these six parts forms a complete episode in itself, the six go to make up an organic whole; and though each episode has its distinctive character, a logical unity is preserved by the festive joy which pervades the entire work. This delightful Christmas music was put together by Bach in 1734; an important portion of it, eleven pieces in all, being borrowed from works composed by him the previous year, for certain festive occasions—viz., a *Drama per musica*, written in honour of the Queen of Poland, another *Drama per musica*, entitled *Die Wahl des Herakles*, composed in honour of a Saxon Prince, and a *Cantata gratulatoria in aduentum regis*. The interpolated pieces are the choruses to the first, third, and fourth parts, several airs, and a duet. Though originally composed for secular purposes, with the exception, perhaps, of an "Echo" air (omitted in performance), they cannot be regarded as out of place, or unworthy of the position which Bach has assigned to them. Like the Passion-music, this *Christmas Oratorio* is epidramatic in form. As in this, the Gospel narrative is declaimed by a single singer, the parts of the different persons mentioned in the narrative are assigned to others, the action from time to time being interrupted by airs, choruses, and chorales of a reflective character. The presentation at the present day of Bach's great choral works must always be attended with difficulty, arising from the fact that he has employed in his scores instruments which are no longer in use, and that in his day there probably existed an artistic method of accompanying from a "figured" bass, which has since become obsolete. In the present instance the oboe da caccia was replaced by the corno inglese; the difficult if not impossible trumpet phrases were delegated to the organ, at which Dr. Stainer presided, and on which the recitatives were accompanied. Though the principal vocal parts were well sustained by Mme. Otto-Alvsleben, Mme. Patey, Mr. Cummings, and Signor Agnesi, and evident care had been taken in the preparation of the music by all concerned, the general result went far to prove the unsuitability of the work for concert use, as well as for performance on so grand a scale. When we reflect that Bach was contented to hear his great works performed with no more than three voices to a part, and about the same proportion of instruments, it is clear that they were never intended for presentation on the exaggerated scale so much in vogue at the present day. That, by reason of its polyphonic character and constantly changing harmony, his music loses much of its effect by being presented in such a way, is none the less certain. Though this interesting work pleased less at the Royal Albert Hall than many more familiar works, credit is none the less due to Mr. Barnby for bringing it forward. That—as he did for the Passion-music—he will exert his influence towards turning it to its proper use, in church, is much to be hoped. As a devotional service, if too much of it be not given at once, it could not fail to be most impressive. That the church will prove its ultimate destination we cannot but think. Already there are signs of this, it having been notified that a selection from it will form part of a special service to be sustained by the College of Organists at St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, on the 6th inst. (the evening of the Epiphany) at 7.30 P.M.

## Musical Notes.

THE first stone of the New National Music School, on the west side of the Albert Hall, was laid by the Duke of Edinburgh, on the 18th ult. Till more information is given than has at present been afforded as to the management of the institution, it is impossible to form any opinion as to its probable future.

MR. RIDLEY PRENTICE, director of the Monthly Popular Concerts, Brixton, still keeps to his design of introducing new or comparatively unknown works in his programmes. In the three concerts of the present (fifth) series, which have already taken place, there have been performed Schubert's fantasia in C major, Op. 159, for pianoforte and violin; Lady Thompson's pianoforte trio in D minor; Walter Macfarren's sonata in E minor, for pianoforte and violoncello; and elegy and gavotte, by T. Ridley Prentice; and of better-known works, violin sonatas in F major (Beethoven), and in D major (Corelli); violoncello sonata in B flat (Mendelssohn); trio in B flat (Schubert); trio in E flat, Op. 12 (Hummel); sonata in E flat, Op. 31, No. 3 (Beethoven); and Variations Serieses in D minor (Mendelssohn). Artists:—Herr Straus, Mr. Henry Holmes, Signor Pezze, Mr. Ridley Prentice, Mr. Minson, &c. At the next

concert (January 20th) the programme will include a new concertante duet in A major, Op. 6, by E. Prout, for pianoforte and harmonium.

A LARGE music hall, to be called the "Albert Hall," was opened at Sheffield on the 15th ult. The building has cost £30,000; and it contains a magnificent organ, erected by the eminent builder, Cavallé-Coll, of Paris, at a cost of £5,000. On the occasion of the opening, Mr. Best gave an organ recital in the afternoon, and the *Messiah* was performed in the evening.

A PROGRAMME which has been forwarded to us from Cambridge shows that, among other pursuits, the study of music is not neglected. At a private performance of classical pianoforte music, by members of the University, the following works were given:—Concertos in D minor and C major for three pianos, by J. S. Bach; Schumann's variations in B flat for two pianos; and Moscheles' "Homage à Händel," also for two pianos. Such a programme is in the highest degree creditable to all who took part in it.

THE *Messiah* was given, for the first time in Leek (Staffordshire), at the twentieth concert of the Amateur Musical Society, on the 16th ult. There was a large and fashionable attendance, and the performance was altogether a great success.

THE programme of the first concert of the Bath Quartett Society, on the 16th ult., included Haydn's quartett, No. 73; Mozart's ditto, No. 1, and Schumann's piano quintett. The performers were Frl. Boerngen, Herr Kummer, and Messrs. Amor, R. Blagrove, and Daubert.

MR. B. HOBSON CARROLL, of Belfast, has been presented by the members of his choral society with a bâton.

THE recently published book entitled "Goethe and Mendelssohn (Macmillan and Co.) has now reached a second edition, which is enriched by fourteen new letters from Mendelssohn to the late Mr. Horsley and his family. We hope shortly to notice the work in these pages.

THE usual monthly concert of the Brixton Amateur Musical Society took place, on the 10th December, at the Angell Town Institution, and was eminently successful, notwithstanding the sudden indisposition of their conductor, Mr. Weist Hill, whose place was most ably filled by Herr Otto Manns, who kindly gave his services on this occasion at a moment's notice. The principal pieces performed were Haydn's symphony in D (the "Clock" symphony) and the overtures to *Son and Stranger*, *Les Deux Aveugles de Tolède* (Méhul), and *Figaro*.

THE Edgbaston Amateur Musical Union gave a concert on the 18th ult., under the direction of its honorary conductor, Mr. C. J. Duchemin, with a programme of more than average interest. The orchestral pieces performed were Mozart's symphony in D (No. 7), the slow movement of Haydn's second grand symphony, Méhul's overture to *Joseph*, Auber's overture to *Le Maçon*, and Mendelssohn's Wedding March. The *Birmingham Daily Post* speaks very highly of the execution of the music.

A FINAL meeting of the Glasgow Festival Committee was held last month, when the executive submitted audited accounts showing a surplus of £1,600 8s. 6d. This handsome balance has been handed over to the Western Infirmary. The *North British Daily Mail* justly claims some credit for having, in a series of leaders, urged the citizens of Glasgow to organise the festival which has resulted so successfully. It is understood that the articles in question were written by the gentleman who now acts as musical critic of the *Glasgow News*, an able journal, lately started in the Conservative interest. The Festival Committee has been re-appointed, to make arrangements for next meeting as soon as the new Music Hall shall be completed.

THE Christmas entertainment of the German Glee Society "Liederkrantz" took place on the 23rd of last month. The programme included glees, rendered with the usual excellence of the society, solo performances on the violoncello (Herr Daubert), violin (Herr Deichmann), and pianoforte (Herr Annbruster and Rummel), and also a song composed by Martin Müller (the conductor of the "Liederkrantz"), which was well received. The evening finished with a rendering—which, both as regards singing and acting, was excellent—of Gené's comic operetta *Zoffschneider*. Herr Müller ably presided at the piano.

WE learn from Mainz that a Frauen-Wagner-Verein (Ladies' Wagner Society) has just been established in that city, under the presidency of the Frau Commerzienrath Schott, with the view to aiding the Bayreuth scheme, by instituting concerts, holding bazars, &c., and canvassing their own immediate circle in behalf of this great national undertaking.

RUBINSTEIN's new opera, *Feramosi*, has been translated into Italian, and is to be produced in the spring at Milan.

ORGAN APPOINTMENTS.—MR. W. A. Langston has been ap-

appointed Organist and Choir-master at Wyoliffe Chapel, Birmingham. Mr. W. A. Dabbs has been elected Organist of Great Barr Church, and Mr. Jas. Gregg has been appointed Organist and Choir-master of Minnigaff Parish Church, N.B. All three gentlemen were pupils of Mr. Stimpson, Organist of the Town Hall, Birmingham.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. E. B. (Norwich).—No cadenzas by Mendelssohn to Beethoven's concertos are published, nor, so far as we are aware, are any in existence. It was, we believe, his invariable practice to extemporise.

J. R. L.—Besides the Bach Society's edition, the *Christmas Oratorio* is published in full score, in octavo size, by Peters, and may be had of Messrs. Augener & Co.

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